

Washington, DC – Today, three Members of Congress extended an invitation to meet with a group of Latino pastors who have recently called for immigrants to boycott the 2010 census until Congress passes comprehensive immigration reform. The intent of the meeting is to address the group's concerns and assure them that participating in the census is not only safe for immigrants but also vital to ensuring an accurate count that reflects the community and advances its interests.

The meeting will involve **Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez**, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) Immigration Task Force, **Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay**, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives, **Rep. Michael Honda**, Chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and **Rev. Miguel A. Rivera**, President of the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders.

"We're convening this meeting to get everyone on the same page, so that together we can lead the community on this issue," said **Rep. Gutierrez**. "It is in the best interest of every immigrant in this country to participate in the 2010 census. There is no question that we need to fix our broken immigration system so that those who want nothing more than to be recognized in this country can begin the process of correcting their status. Yet, even though we are still awaiting concrete legislative action from the White House and Congress, hardworking immigrants owe it to themselves to provide an accurate portrait of our nation and the needs of its diverse communities. Our immigrant communities should rest assured that anything they share with the Census Bureau cannot be used against them. In fact, our immigrants need to know that it is unlawful for individual census records to be shared with anyone, including government agencies or private

organizations. To not be counted —and worse, to boycott the census— is to jeopardize federal funding for schools, hospitals, roads and countless other resources our communities collectively rely on."

"Fixing our broken immigration policy and the Census are two vital, but separate issues," said **Rep. Clay**. "The Constitution requires us to count everyone within our borders, regardless of who they are, how they came here, or what their immigration status is. As Chairman, my goal is to count everyone, because everyone deserves to be counted."

"The decennial census count will affect the daily lives of everyone in our country for the next ten years," said **Rep. Honda**. "It is vital for all people, especially underserved minority communities, to be counted so that they may be represented in our great democracy. As we continue to our work on comprehensive immigration reform, it is important that we also put forth our best efforts to ensure a full and accurate census count. Underserved minority communities are among those that need the critical federal, state, and local resources that are determined by the census count. Let's make sure that everyone is counted."